DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 196 238 EC 131 388

AUTHOR Amerson, George T.; Kachur, Donald
TITLE Preparing Educators to Teach Handicapped Children in the Regular Class.
INSTITUTION Illinois State Univ., Normal.
PUB DATE [80]
NOTE 12p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Competency Based Teacher Education; *Delivery Systems; *Disabilities; Higher Education; *Interdisciplinary Approach; Mainstreaming; *Models; *Program Development; *Teacher Education
IDENTIFIERS Deans Grant Project; *Illinois State University

ABSTRACT

The paper describes the competency based, field centered Illinois State University Dean's Grant Project designed to exemplify interdisciplinary efforts among university faculty, parents, school personnel, community agencies and organizations, and other child advocates as well as to upgrade regular teacher education so that all children can be educated in the least restrictive environment as mandated in P.L. 94-142 (the Education for All Handicapped Children Act). The development, implementation, and evaluation of the total teacher preparation model involved a task force advisory committee; a community liaison committee; and interdisciplinary teams (from departments of specialized educational development, curriculum and instruction, educational administration and foundations, the Laboratory School, and psychology). The discrepancy evaluative model was used to evaluate the project. Among the instruments used for evaluation were planning guidelines and goals, rating scales, and student feedback forms. Main areas of the teacher preparation process were observation with mainstreaming classrooms; practicum assignments and demonstrations; teacher interviews, conferences, and excursions; and supervised field experience. (SBH)

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PREPARING EDUCATORS TO TEACH HANDICAPPED CHILDREN IN THE REGULAR CLASS

George T. Amerson, Coordinator
Donald Kachur, Coordinator

The Dean's Grant Project
Illinois State University
Normal, Illinois

The Education for All Handicapped Children's Act (PL 94-142) was signed into law by President Gerald Ford in 1975. The implementation of PL 94-142 has generated legal, social and educational issues that have far-reaching ramifications for college and university teacher preparation programs throughout the nation. The new federal legislation serves as the national affirmation that the educational needs of all handicapped children are recognized and that their right to free and appropriate education in the least restrictive environment is protected. One significant emphasis of the law is the emerging emphasis on the important role that the regular class teacher is expected to assume in the education of the handicapped student in the school. With the growing numbers of handicapped children in regular classes, teacher preparation programs must focus on the needs of teachers who lack adequate competencies to function in their new teaching roles.

The Dean's Grant initiative was enacted by the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped (BEH), Office of Education, to stimulate the reconceptualization and development of teacher preparation programs designed to accommodate the needs of handicapped children in the regular class. Dean's grants are competitively awarded by the BEH to institutions of higher education to assist them to respond to the

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education of all children in the least restrictive environment. The Illinois State University Dean's Grant is one of six projects in Illinois that were funded by the BEH in 1979. The ISU Dean's Grant was initiated in July, 1979, and subsequently refunded for the 1980-81 project year. The Dean's Grant Project, Illinois State University, is more than just another attempt to upgrade regular education teacher preparation. Rather, the project is a collaborative enterprise designed to exemplify interdisciplinary efforts among university faculty, parents, school personnel, community agencies and organizations, and other child advocates.

The historical education evolution of PL 94-142 is easily discerned if one notes the increase in the number of articles, books and research reports that have occurred during the past fifteen years. The theoretical framework of the Illinois State University Dean's Grant Project was constructed from the major works of Gagne (1977) and Glaser (1971) and others who have concerned themselves with objectively describing the conditions of learning related to competency based education. Other writers such as Mager (1968, 1972, 1973) have taken the position that the operational definition of teaching objectives is necessary for the systematic management of learning. Trow (1950, 1971, 1976) has been specifically concerned with the development of systems models for teaching, curriculum development and the selection of teaching materials.

This article describes the various aspects of the competency based, field-centered ISU Dean's Grant Project that were accomplished during the annual period extending from June 1, 1979 through June 1, 1980.

THE PLANNING APPROACH MODEL

The planning component of the Dean's Grant Project focused on the development, implementation and evaluation of the total teacher preparation model. Using the planning approach model, the Project coordinators solicited the cooperative participation of university faculty, parents, school personnel, community agences and organizations.

The planning approach model resulted in a reciprocal flow of information and the coordinators were able to draw on the diverse expertise of the participants. Similarly, the meetings provided a format for the dissemination of information related to the ISU "Teacher Preparation Model." In the early stages of project development, the coordinators integrated the "developmental conceptual adoption process" into the planning approach model. The process was developed by G. E. Hall of the University of Texas, Austin. The overall model provided a guide for the important emphasis that the coordinators placed upon facilitating faculty and community cooperation. Each of the model's stages of concern about the innovative nature of the Dean's Grant were considered, in turn, in relation to the project goal of establishing interdisciplinary faculty cooperation in the development and implementation of the project.

A. Advisory and Working Committees

This formidable task was initiated and carried out through the following community liaison and university faculty groups and committees:

1. The Task Force Advisory Committee

   The Task Force was formed to monitor program implementation and development and to make recommendations for each procedure and practice of the mainstreaming program. Members were

selected to reflect a wide range of expertise in a broad range of educational disciplines. Members of the Task Force oversee the development and implementation of program procedures and serve as consultants and resource persons to the Directors and Coordinators of the mainstreaming program. Emphasis is focused on group decision making in terms of the mainstreaming project. Planning and decision making are carried out in monthly Task Force meetings. When major decisions need to be made, the entire project staff is asked to join the Task Force group and to provide input relevant to the decision making process. Thus, the members of the project are also actively involved in the decision making process. Furthermore, representation from the Task Force is represented on the larger Community Liaison committee and some major decisions involve a combination of these two committees.

2. The Community Liaison Committee

The Community Liaison Group was organized to facilitate the development of new and/or recommended procedures and practices in the area of mainstreaming education. The Community Liaison Group is a vital component of the Dean's Grant at ISU and provides an important link between the community and the University. This advisory body provides for concerned citizens, professionals and other child advocates to join in a cooperative venture to improve the quality of teacher preparation for Regular Elementary Education at Illinois State University.

3. Interdisciplinary Teams - Modularized Instructional Component

The primary instructional delivery system for preparing regular teachers to meet the needs of exceptional children is based on a modularized, field-centered approach to regular education teacher preparation. Eleven teams, composed of interdisciplinary faculty from the Departments of Specialized Educational Development, Curriculum and Instruction, Educational Administration and Foundations, the Laboratory School, and Psychology, began the instructional revision process during the pre-summer session of 1980. Each instructional module consists of a set of student competencies, learning activities, pre- and post-tests and continuing assessment procedures. The modularized instruction provides instructional flexibility and reinforces personalization, individualization, self-pacing and other alternate means of instruction. Selection of appropriate instructional materials and learning experiences are also provided within each instructional module.

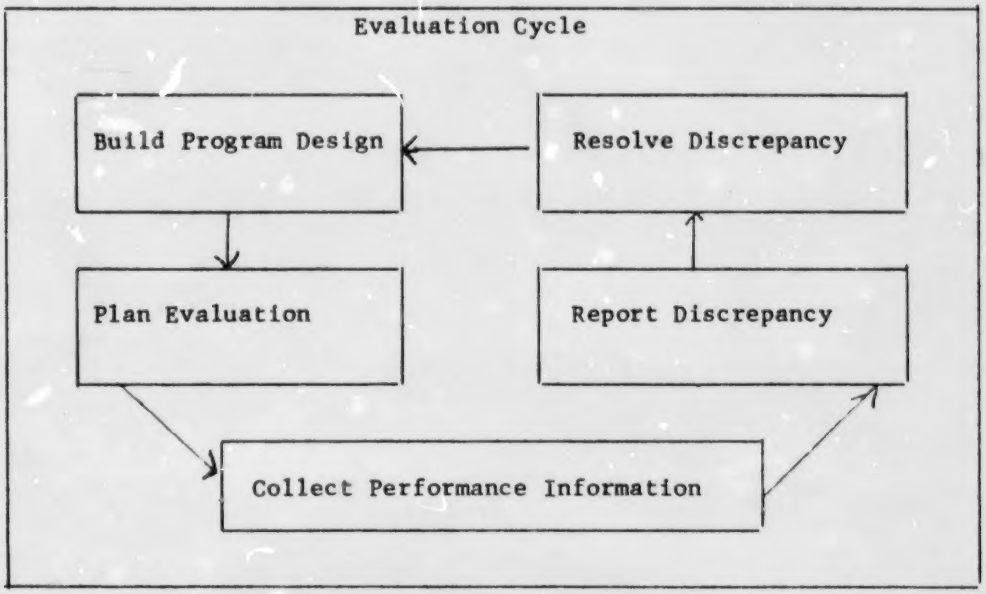
The Dean's Grant Project information, materials and procedures for dissemination accrued and increased in number and kind as each cycle of the project was completed during the 1979-80 project year.

A comprehensive data bank designed to assist in the retrieval and dissemination of discrepancy data, related to the project, is being developed at Illinois State University. The computerized system will facilitate rapid transmission and interpretation of discrepancy data so that the project coordinators can act to continuously update program improvements.

B. Dean's Grant Project Evaluation Component

The primary methodology used for the evaluation of the Dean's Grant Project is based on an adaptation of the "Discrepancy Model." The discrepancy evaluative mode facilitates the collection and utilization of formative data which is of foremost importance to the successful planning, development and implementation of the project. Thus, evaluation, accountability and visibility are stressed as vital concepts directly related to the informational retrieval, dissemination, and programmatic components underlying the reciprocal feedback system of the planning approach model. Further, the discrepancy design allows comparison of the existing components, developed during the 1979-80 project year, with projected and desired components. The model will be used to expand the scope of the Dean's Grant project to include secondary, junior high, educational administration in their cooperative efforts to meet the mandates of PL 94-142. The following paradigm illustration in Figure II illustrates the evaluation cycle.

Figure II



Evaluation Instruments

Assessment of student and faculty competencies, curriculum reevaluation and revision was based on the planning goals. The following assessment and evaluation instruments were used to assess the degree and level of attainment of the planning goals that were accomplished during the 1979-80 project year. Relevant informational data was collected and analyzed using the following evaluation instruments:

1. The Discrepancy Design chart and calendar
2. Planning Guidelines and Goals
3. Rating scales
4. Coordinators' log and records calendar
5. The Developmental Conceptual Adoption Process
6. Check lists
7. Conventional Charting Procedures
8. Student Feedback Forms
9. Student Competency Mastery Scale (Practica and student teaching for On-Site Supervisors and College Supervisors)
10. Attitude Toward Handicapped Children's Scale

C. Planning and Development Component

The planning and development component implemented by the coordinators during the 1979-80 Project year was centered on and organized around specified student competency clusters, guidelines and planning goals. Table 1 provides an overview of the procedures which reflect the systematic approach used in the planning and development of the project. Some of the essential procedures for the planning, development and implementation of strategies and activities designed to accomplish the planning goals are arranged in developmental steps of ascending order and follows:

Table I

Overview: Guidelines
Systematic Planning and Development of the Dean's Grant 1979-80

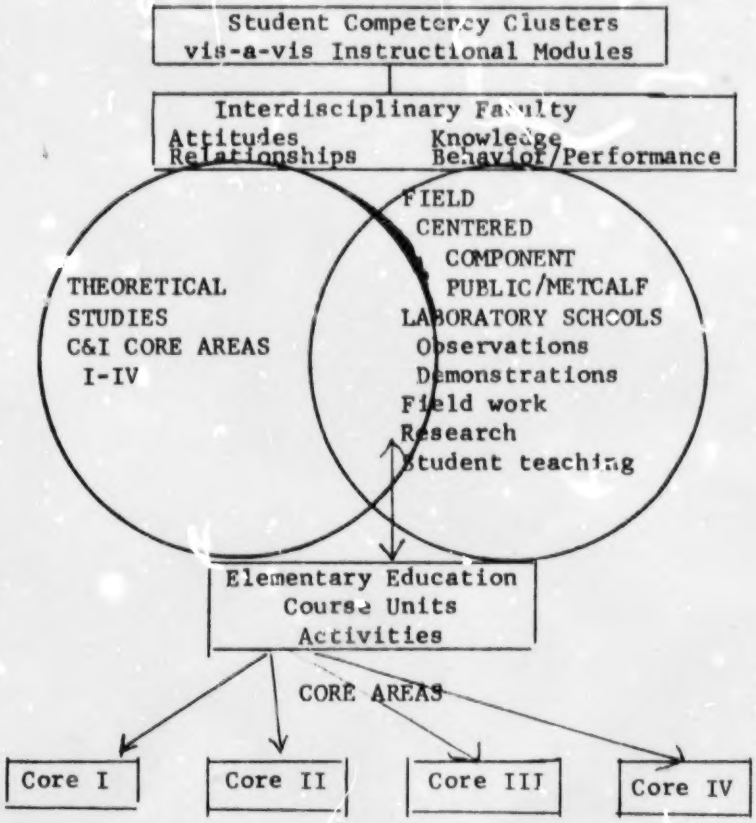
Step	Topical Heading	Procedure
1.	Presperified student competencies, instructional component	Present competency clusters via a series of informational and working and group sessions. Solicit faculty input relative to scope and manageability of student competency clusters. Determine appropriate curriculum-competency match in elementary education.
2.	Project Planning Goals	Conceptualize the type of instruction to be developed and establish the general planning goals for the Project year 1979-80. Course analysis and modular implementation, namely competency based format.
3.	Interdisciplinary faculty/program development at the elementary level	Develop faculty awareness and participation in project planning, development and implementation. Establishment of advisory and working groups, i.e., Task Force, Community Liaison, parents' groups and other advisory bodies.
4.	Anticipated Teaching Roles of Dean's Grant Project Graduates	Conceptualize the type of teaching competencies which characterize anticipated teaching roles to be used as a guide in the planning, development and implementation of appropraite instructional modules.
5.	Curriculum Change: Instructional materials, Integration of Public Schools, i.e., Field Centered Component In-service Component	Establish Interdisciplinary Developmental Teams. Develop and implement instructional strategies in relation to modular delivery systems. Initiate arrangement with public and Metcalf Laboratory School for practica facilities/field centered component for preservice and in-service teacher preparation.
6.	Methods of providing increasing faculty/program involvement across departments within the College of Education, ISU.	Extend conceptual teacher education preparation model to all teacher preparation programs with the College of Education. Institute comprehensive programmatic revision in Special Education, Educational Administration, Junior High Education, and other departments providing certification for teachers at ISU. Plan alternate strategies and approaches to course integration within and across departments within the College of Education, ISU.

D. The Field Centered Component

The field centered component is central to the teacher preparation process and has been integrated into course unit activities in elementary education. Essentially, the intent of this important instructional component is to provide the regular educator the opportunity to develop the basic knowledge and competencies that are required to personalize and individualize instruction in the mainstreaming classroom.

The main areas of activity are illustrated in the following diagram and include:

1. Observation within mainstreaming classrooms, i.e., public schools/Metcalf Laboratory School
2. Practicum assignments and demonstrations during the elementary education class periods time-tabled for appropriate activities
3. Teacher interviews, conferences and excursions to view relevant mainstreaming programs
4. Supervised field experience including student teaching in mainstreaming classrooms, i.e., public/Metcalf Laboratory School, and others



Concluding Remarks:

The modular instructional system, discussed in this article, is intended to be the most effective instructional delivery system designed to meet the mandates of PL 94-142 and HB 150. Beginning Fall, 1980, and continuing through Spring, 1981, the instructional modular development and implementation process will be simultaneous. In addition, two of the interdisciplinary teams will be engaged in team teaching across departments within the College of Education. The instructional teams consisting of faculty from Special Education, Psychology and Elementary Education will be cooperating in the delivery of the instructional modules to students in the elementary education program. The efficiency of the instructional procedures and delivery systems utilized for student achievement mastery of modular competencies is being tested on a continuous basis throughout the duration of the three year project. Plans are being developed to study the impact of the Dean's Grant teacher preparation model in relation to the public schools and ultimately the children which we serve. The follow-up evaluation plan will show a close affiliation with the local schools in which the ISU project graduates are placed. A longitudinal study will be conducted in 1983 and will extend over a period estimated to be three to five years' duration. The data obtained from the long range educational plan will be used to make predictions relative to the futuristic educational aspects of the Dean's Grant teacher preparation model at Illinois State University.

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